

Skirlaugh CE Primary School

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart”

Be Brave ~ Be Kind ~ Be Your Best



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved by Governors

Summer 2026

Last Renewal Date

Summer 2026

Next Renewal Date

Spring 2029

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: 2021)

Introduction

At Skirlough CE Primary School we provide a stimulating environment which sparks children's curiosity, imagination and creativity, inspiring a lifelong love of learning. We believe that every child is a unique individual and work hard to nurture their interests, value their contribution, respond to each child's needs and guide their learning skillfully. We recognise the value and crucial role that Early Years plays in providing a foundation for all future learning and strive to ensure that every child leaves the Early Years Foundation Stage ready for the next stage of their learning.

Vision

We believe that children learn best through rich, memorable experiences which connect with their interests and inspire them to explore further. Our environment and curriculum offer is centred around this, providing opportunities for children's physical and emotional development, alongside promoting high levels of communication and language.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we believe that children learn best through play: this provides opportunities for children to explore and make sense of the world around them; to engage in schematic play; think creatively; and work cooperatively with others as they solve problems, investigate, discuss and negotiate plans. Consequently, our curriculum is centred around carefully-planned opportunities for play alongside following the children's own interests and fascinations.

We strive to achieve the following aims:

- To create a stimulating and challenging environment which engages children's interests and promotes independence;
- To provide opportunities through play, which encourage children to develop emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically and develop a sense of community;
- To develop positive and supportive relationships with parents and families;
- To value and celebrate the richness of diversity through an understanding that all children and families are unique;
- To continue to build upon what the child has already learned at home, broadening their range of learning experiences and stimulating their curiosity, creativity and imagination.

Curriculum Intent

The intent of our EYFS curriculum is to ensure that our children develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to achieve fulfilling lives. The EYFS is the start of our children's school journey towards achieving this.

We aim to provide rich, hands-on learning experiences which foster curiosity and provide a stimulating learning environment. Our curriculum is carefully designed to respond to the individual needs of each cohort, whilst clearly developing the specific skills and knowledge which lay the foundations for future learning within the school's curriculum.

The principles which underpin this are grouped into three key themes, referred to as characteristics of effective learning within the Early Years Statutory Framework:

- Engagement: playing and exploring
- Motivation: active learning
- Thinking: creatively and critically

Implementation

The Early Years curriculum is centred around the 7 key areas of learning and development:

Prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical Development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

We teach a wide range of foundation subjects through the areas of 'Understanding the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design' further details of which can be found in our Curriculum Map.

Our curriculum is enhanced through a range of experiences, visitors and visits throughout the year, for example visiting a farm, taking part in seasonal trails, exploring the village we live in and talking to people in our community. Our learning is underpinned by key texts and special stories which develop vocabulary and enhance the children's understanding. We learn through a blend of whole-class input, small group work, adult directed play and child initiated play activities.

During independent learning time, staff harness children's new ideas and thoughts and use these teachable moments to their advantage. This time allows the adults to identify children's next steps which reflect their developmental readiness and individual needs. Our staff judge when to intervene and when to observe from a distance. We use a combination of commentary and effective questioning to find information that children know and ask them about it. This gives opportunities for staff to assess a child's understanding in context and make links to other curriculum areas.

Phonics and Early Reading

Children in the EYFS learn to read through the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics following the school's scheme: Read, Write Inc. Children in reception access daily taught phonics sessions led by the class teacher in which they learn to read sounds individually and then blend these to read words. Once they are able to blend, children will have access to phonetically decodable books which contain only the sounds they have been taught; these will be read with the children in school and are also taken home to share with parents.

Impact

Our next steps happen "in the moment". When an adult is interacting with a child during independent learning, they talk to the children using effective questioning to ask what that child knows, identify an area for development (understanding, misconception, vocabulary, sentence structure etc.) and then fill that gap in learning through running commentary. This enables the child to fill that gap in learning and to progress to understanding. An adult then helps that child to share their newfound understanding to check progress has been made.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution families make. We actively involve parents in their child's learning by:

- Providing sessions where both children and parents can come and get to know the setting, staff and other children.
- Inviting parents to an induction meeting to talk about how we will work with children and answer any questions parents may have. We also offer another meeting as the children move into Reception to give further information about phonics, reading and mathematics.
- We offer home visits for our 3-4-year-old children which gives the opportunity to talk to parents on a 1:1 basis about their child and any concerns they may have. It also allows the children to get to know the staff and show what is important to them, whether it be their favourite toy, a pet or to share a book together.
- We have an open door policy so that parents are welcome to come and chat to staff at any time about their children.
- There are formal meetings for parents during the year where the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- We use Tapestry as an online Learning Journey. On this we provide lots of photos and share the children's learning with parents. This is also reciprocal and parents can share comments and photos about the child's learning or interests at home.
- Throughout the year there are many events that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, stay and read, stay and maths, sports day, etc.

Assessment

From the academic year 2021/2022 the reception baseline assessment (RBA) is a statutory requirement of all maintained primary schools. It is an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting points in language, communication and literacy, and mathematics

The Baseline will be a short task-based assessment where pupils will use practical resources to complete tasks and teachers will record the results on a computer. Schools are required to carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of pupils starting Reception. No numerical score will be shared and the data will only be used at the end of Key Stage 2 to form the school-level progress measure.

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. This is filled in by all staff from EYFS and covers all areas of learning. Children are assessed against the set of criteria – Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are:

- Emerging - not yet reaching expected levels
- Expected - meeting 'expected' levels of development

Admissions

Reception Admissions

For admission to reception, for pupils who will turn 5 in the next academic year, parents should apply for a place following the East Riding of Yorkshire Council process. Further details on the process, deadlines and appeal process can be found on their website: www.eastriding.gov.uk/apply-for-a-school-place

Nursery Admissions

We offer flexible nursery provision for children immediately following their third birthday. Children are welcome to join our nursery at any point throughout the year; however, their FEE entitlement will not be available until the term after their third birthday and sessions prior to this will be chargeable.

Parents may reserve their child's place in our nursery at any point. In the first instance, parents should complete the expression of interest form which is available to download on the school website. Places will then be confirmed within 14 days.

The term before a child is due to start in our nursery, parents will receive a further admissions pack to complete which provides up-to-date information about the child. Parents can also book two, free, 2 hours taster sessions for children to come and settle in to our setting prior to starting; parents are welcome to stay with them for these sessions.

There is a minimum expectation that children attend the nursery for a minimum of 15 hours per week. The hours can be used flexibly throughout the week in sessions of the parents' choosing. Sessions are typically 3 hours long (9:00 - 12:00 or 12:30 - 3:30), however, lunchtime sessions can be booked at a cost of £2.50 per day should parents wish for their child to attend all day. School meals can also be ordered and paid for, or children can bring a packed lunch.

Where parents share their child's care over two settings, they are encouraged to contact us at their earliest convenience to discuss their individual circumstances.

Transition to Key Stage One

Careful planning and liaison between staff ensures the transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage One is as smooth as possible. The children are given the opportunity to get to know their new teacher through different sessions, and visits to their new classroom during the summer term. A meeting for parents will also be held towards the end of the Summer Term. Accurate information regarding your child's progress in all seven areas of learning, and their characteristics of effective learning will be shared with the Year 1 teacher to enable them to plan effectively for the children's next stage of development. Clear curriculum planning and links between the EYFS and Year 1 curriculum ensures that learning time is maximised and the children are ready and able to access the next stage in their learning journey.